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# Utah Watershed Review

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Utah's Nonpoint-Source Water-Quality Newsletter

April-May, 2004

## Special Focus: Volunteers Improve Watersheds

The Governor's Watershed Initiative shifted into high gear in March with Utah Governor Olene Walker taking time out of her schedule to "teach" local fourth grade students about water pollution (See page 5 for the story).

Then in April, as the Governor had predicted in her January State of the State Address, "armies of volunteers" gathered by Utah rivers and lakes to plant trees and cleanup trash as part of the Adopt-A-Waterbody program and Take Pride in Utah month.

Volunteer projects have taken place this spring in 11 of the



*Governor Walker teaches 4th graders about water pollution using the Enviroscope model. Shelly Quick (left) and Utah Commissioner of Agriculture, Cary Peterson (right) look on as Walker "rains" on the "polluted" watershed. This interactive demonstration is fun for youth and adults.*



*Fourth graders from Box Elder County Take Pride in their newly planted tree along the banks of the Bear River in Northern Utah.*

governor's Top 25 watershed areas, as well as several other locations throughout Utah.

The Governor's Watershed Initiative promotes watershed awareness and education, watershed improvement in 25 key areas of the state, and volunteerism and community involvement in watersheds.

The specific community involvement goal is to increase the number of Adopt-A-Waterbody (AAW) groups from 40 at the beginning of the Initiative in Nov. 2003, to 80 by this November. The program currently has 67 member groups, families and individuals.

For more information on the AAW program or to apply online, go to <http://adoptawaterbody.utah.gov>.



*Utah Department of Environmental Quality Executive Director, Dianne Nielson, helps plant trees with fourth graders from Mountain View Elementary along the Jordan River.*

## Highlights

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# Volunteers Work on Utah Watersheds

Volunteers throughout Utah showed up at local sites to take care of water resources in mid-April to kick off Take Pride in Utah month.

Utah Governor Olene Walker signed the Take Pride in Utah declaration on April 16 in front of 350 4<sup>th</sup> grade students during the Weber Water Fair in Ogden.

"Watersheds are our life sheds," Walker told the students.

Meanwhile, in Beaver County, nearly 200 Beaver high School geography students were planting rangeland plants along a tributary to the Beaver River.

"The work you have done today will make a really difference in this watershed" Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson told the teens at an awards lunch following two hours of work.

The following day Adopt-A-Waterbody projects took place in more than ten counties statewide.

On Onion Creek near Moab, Utah Department of Natural Resource Executive Director, Bib Morgan was joined by Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Lynn Scarlett and other agency officials to recognize volunteers for several projects under being completed along the 18-mile creek managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

"Watersheds are the lifeblood of our communities," Morgan told volunteers as he presented the Governor's Watershed Improvement Award certificates to several local groups involved in a variety of watershed improvement projects.

Volunteers have planted cottonwood trees and willows, helped put up fences, cleaned up illegal campsites and educated visitors about the importance of preserving the fragile waterway.

Further south in San Juan County, volunteers helped BLM and Utah Division of Oil, Gas and mining employees plant native trees and vegetation along Cottonwood Wash, another of the governor's 25 watershed areas targeted for improvement this year as part of the Governor's Watershed Initiative.

Near St. George, Utah Lieutenant Governor Gayle McKeachnie joined local high school students and adult volunteers as they removed the noxious weed tamarisk and planted native vegetation near the Virgin River. McKeachnie also presented the Governor's Watershed Improvement Awards to project organizers.

Projects also took place April 17th in Northern Utah.

Members of the Wasatch Mountain Parrothead club cleaned up a portion of the shoreline of Deer Creek reservoir. Meanwhile members of High Country Fly Fishers cleaned up a section of East Canyon Creek. Another cleanup took place in Ogden Canyon that day. More than 50 members of the Ogden Canyon Club braved wind, rain and cool temperatures to take part in a cleanup from the mouth of the canyon up to the Pineview Reservoir dam.

Several projects also took place in watersheds not on the Governor's

list of 25.

Near the Idaho border, employees of NUCOR Steel volunteered to restore and cleanup a section of the Malad River for the second straight year.

At the Bend in the River Urban Treehouse site on the Jordan River

in Salt Lake City, Utah Department of Environmental Quality Executive Director, Dianne Nielson, joined youth and adult volunteers to plant native trees and plants along the river and pull discarded shopping carts and other trash from the river.



## Utah Watershed Review

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## Box Elder 4th Graders Plant new life into Bear River

Fourth-graders from three Box Elder County elementary schools got out of the classroom and onto the farm to plant trees, looking at bugs and making arrowheads along the banks of the Bear River on Kyle Potter's farm in late April.

The students were assisting the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in planting trees to improve and stabilize the riverbanks while improving habitat for area wildlife as part of Earth Day and Arbor Day celebrations.

"One day these kids will be able to drive along that road, look down at these trees growing along the river, and say 'I did that.' It gives them a sense of ownership," said Troy Forest, Northern Utah Soil Conservation District. "It gives them a sense of ownership."

The 270 students from North Park, McKinley and Century elementary schools were divided into six teams to plant more than 2,000 bushes, trees and shrubs along the banks of the river. They also attended workshops to learn about soil and water conservation, bugs, wild turkeys and the history of the area.

The area was once inhabited by Shoshone Indians. Trappers, mountain men and early explorers also used the Bear River frequently. Earlier this spring on the same farm, the Wild Turkey Federation released wild turkeys, which will benefit from the trees and shrubs planted by the school students.

Five varieties of trees and shrubs native to the area and beneficial for wildlife were chosen, including American plum, choke cherries, cottonwood, golden currants and woods rose, more commonly called wild rose, for the students to plant.

"The shrubs were chosen because of their berries and flowers that are good for wildlife," said Wayne Greenhalgh, from the Utah Association of Conservation Districts.

Fabric mulch with slits, where the bare root trees and shrubs were to be planted, already was in place along the river's edge when the students arrived. Each student planted up to 10 plants.

"The fabric mulch is a weed barrier and a moisture barrier. It keeps the moisture in and the weeds out," Greenhalgh said.

The schools and students were



*Students help project coordinators plant seedlings along the Bear River.*

awarded Watershed Improvement Awards as part of the Adopt-A-Waterbody program and the Governor's Watershed Initiative.

This was the tenth of the Governor's list of 25 priority water bodies to undertake a volunteer watershed improvement project.

A similar activity took place last week in Snowville. Students from western Box Elder schools planted trees at Morgan's Dairy. The trees were planted to stabilize the banks of the river through the farm from the Stone Reservoir.



*Students were given T-shirts, recognition and lunch in exchange for their work.*



## Governor Kicks Off Take Pride in Utah Month at Weber Water Fair



*Governor Walker watches one of the many water demonstrations during the Weber Water Fair in Ogden April 16.*

Utah Governor Olene S. Walker signed the Take Pride in Utah (TPIU) declaration and officially kicked off TPIU month April 16 at the Weber Water Fair in Ogden.

Fourth grade students from throughout Weber County attend the annual two-day event.

Walker talked to the students about the importance of water and watersheds in their daily lives.

"Watersheds are our lifesheds," Walker exclaimed.

Walker's message is part of her Watershed Initiative, which is designed to improve watershed health, inform and educate adults and students about watersheds and what they can do to keep them

healthy, and to get citizens involved in taking care of the state's water bodies.

As part of the watershed education aspect of the initiative, Walker asks students five basic questions about watersheds:

- What is a watershed?
- Where is your watershed?
- How healthy is your watershed?
- Where does the water go?
- What can you do to help?

Students anxiously raised their hands to answer the questions, fresh from learning about many aspects of water.

Following her presentation, the governor watch one of the water demonstrations with students.

## Learning About Water Chemistry In "Real" Setting

By Shelly Quick

Utah Department of Environmental Quality

Thanks to an unlikely partnership between the Colby School and the Snyderville Wastewater Treatment Facility, fourth, fifth and sixth grade students were able to test water and observe amoebas, rotifers and flagellates under the microscope. Sophie Moffat, teacher at the Colby School, applied for and received a \$1000 Toshiba Grant that was used to purchase microscopes and an incubator for the school. After studying microbiology and water chemistry in the classroom, Ms. Moffat wanted her students to apply their knowledge in a real laboratory. The Snyderville facility had an older lab that they offered to the school for some "hands on" experience. In addition to the lab, Larry Smith, Gordan Evans, Cliff Medler and Gary Hill donated their time to explain to the students how and why samples were collected and analyzed in a lab. The students learned how to follow instructions, label the sample and record their data.

The supplemental education is part of Governor Walker's Watershed Initiative. Snyderville Basin WTF discharges wastewater to Silver Creek that is listed on the Governor's Top Twenty Five watersheds needing our help. The Governor is encouraging students to learn more about their local watershed, its health and what each person can do to help improve water quality. For more information look on the web at [www.adoptawaterbody.utah.gov](http://www.adoptawaterbody.utah.gov).

### Girls of Science



*Photo by: Shelly Quick*

*Students from the Colby School in Park City spent part of the morning in the lab at the Silver Creek Wastewater Treatment facility learning about water science in a real laboratory setting. Students went outside and collected water samples. They then brought the samples back into the lab to look amoebas and other microorganisms under a microscope.*



# Gov. Teaches About Water During Ag. Day

In mid March Utah Governor Olene S. Walker taught a group of Salt Lake City fourth graders about the benefits of watersheds and agriculture as part of national Agriculture Week.

"Our watersheds are our life sheds," she told the students. "We have selected watersheds throughout our state, which need cleaning and caring for, and it will take a statewide, team effort to meet the challenge."

Under the Walker Work Plan the governor has selected 25 segments of key rivers and lakes for water quality improvements. These 25 watersheds cover more than a fifth of the state.

As part of the watershed initiative, elementary school students throughout Utah are being educated about five key questions relating to watersheds: 1. What is a watershed?; 2. Where is my watershed?; 3. How healthy is my watershed?; 4. Where does the water go?; and 5. What can I do?

Walker took part in a hands-on teaching demonstration of how watersheds clean our water. She



*Governor Walker talks to students about how much water it takes to produce food and the importance of conserving water.*

was joined by Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson; Executive Director of the Department of Natural Resources, Bob Morgan and Executive Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, Dianne Nielson.

"Watersheds are important to all

Utahns because they provide the life-giving supply of water that grows our food and provides for our needs," Walker said.

"We've set a lofty goal to take care of these vast areas, but together I

know we can meet it."

Walker, Lt. Gov. McKeahnie, and state agency directors Peterson, Morgan and Nielson have all taken the watershed initiative message at



*Utah Commissioner of Agriculture Cary G. Peterson talks to students about the importance of having trees and other plants near stream banks to keep soil from eroding into the water.*

schools, conferences and service projects since the Governor's Watershed Initiative started in Nov. 2003.





# Uintah High School Wins Utah Envirothon



*Students test water as part of the aquatics section of the Utah Envirothon in Park City. Students went through a total of five rotations during the Saturday hands on part of the competition. Students also gave oral presentations.*

PARK CITY – Uintah High School won the Utah Envirothon, a natural resource competition held in Park City May 7-8.

Uintah High School team members Chris McFarland, Morgan Lauf, Becca Perry, Andrea Severson and Bruce Daniel competed against 13 other high school teams at the state competition. The team was sponsored by the Uintah Soil Conservation District.

This is the second time the Vernal high school has won the state competition. The last time Uintah High won the state competition was in 1999

The students, accompanied by their team advisor and science teacher Tom Elder, will now go on to compete against more than 50 other teams from around the United States and Canada at the Canon Envirothon on July 26-Aug. 1 in Buckhannon, West Virginia. The Canon Envirothon is North America's largest high school environmental competition.

Logan High School placed second in this year's Utah Envirothon and rookie team Hurricane High place third over all.

The Envirothon is a natural resource competition for high school students. As a team, the students are tested on their knowledge of the state's natural resources – soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife and a current environmental issue. This year's current issue was natural resource management in the urban environment. Students visit five in-the-field stations where

written and hands-on problem solving is required. They also compete in an oral presentation event. For more information about

the Envirothon, go to [www.utahenvirothon.org](http://www.utahenvirothon.org).

The Utah Envirothon is sponsored by the Utah Association of Conservation Districts, Kamas Valley Soil Conservation District, U.S. Forest Service, Campbell Scientific, Utah Soil Conservation Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Utah State University Extension Forestry, Utah State University Extension/EPA, Canon USA, Utah Agriculture in the Classroom, Utah Division of Water Quality, Utah Society for Environmental Education, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands and USU Extension 4-H.





# Utah Water Quality Director Resigns



*Don Ostler, right, presents a Governor's Watershed Improvement Award to members of the Ogden Canyon Club during a canyon cleanup day in April 2004*

The nation's longest-serving state water quality director, Don Ostler, announced his resignation after 32 years of service with the State of Utah. He has accepted the position of executive director for the Upper Colorado River Commission. His last day at DEQ will be

Friday, May 14.

"I am excited for the future, but I will miss the people at DEQ so very much," Ostler said. "There are some great and dedicated people at DEQ, and much has been accomplished to improve our environment and protect our water.

I am proud to have been a part of it with them."

"Utah's water quality is better because of Don's work," said DEQ Executive Director Dianne Nielson. "His leadership and commitment to quality surface water and groundwater are reflected in the quality of our environment."

Ostler became director of the Utah Division of Water Quality in 1987. He provided leadership in the development of projects and programs to protect and improve water quality in Utah, including implementation of the Clean Water Act and development of the state Groundwater Protection Program. Recognizing the value of "National Standards, Neighborhood Solutions," Ostler and other state, federal and private partners developed the state environmental program for concentrated animal feeding operations, which became a model for the federal regulatory program. He has also been involved in the administration of various programs such as construction grants, state wastewater loans

and water restoration plans.

During his career, Ostler has served as president of the Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators, chairman of the Bear River Commission's Water Quality Committee, chairman of the Western State Water Council's Water Quality Committee and member of the University of Utah's Civil Engineering Advisory Committee and the Utah Soil Conservation Commission.

Ostler was recently nominated by the American Academy of Environmental Engineers as one of eight nominees to the Utah Engineers Council for the 2004 Engineer of the Year award. He has also received a public service award from the Water Environment Association.

Ostler has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Utah. He has been a registered professional engineer since 1971.

## DWR Leads Restoration Effort on San Pitch

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources is leading efforts to improve the Upper San Pitch River watershed in Sanpete County.

Using paid crews and volunteers, DWR employees have been placing erosion mats, planting riparian vegetation and constructing fences

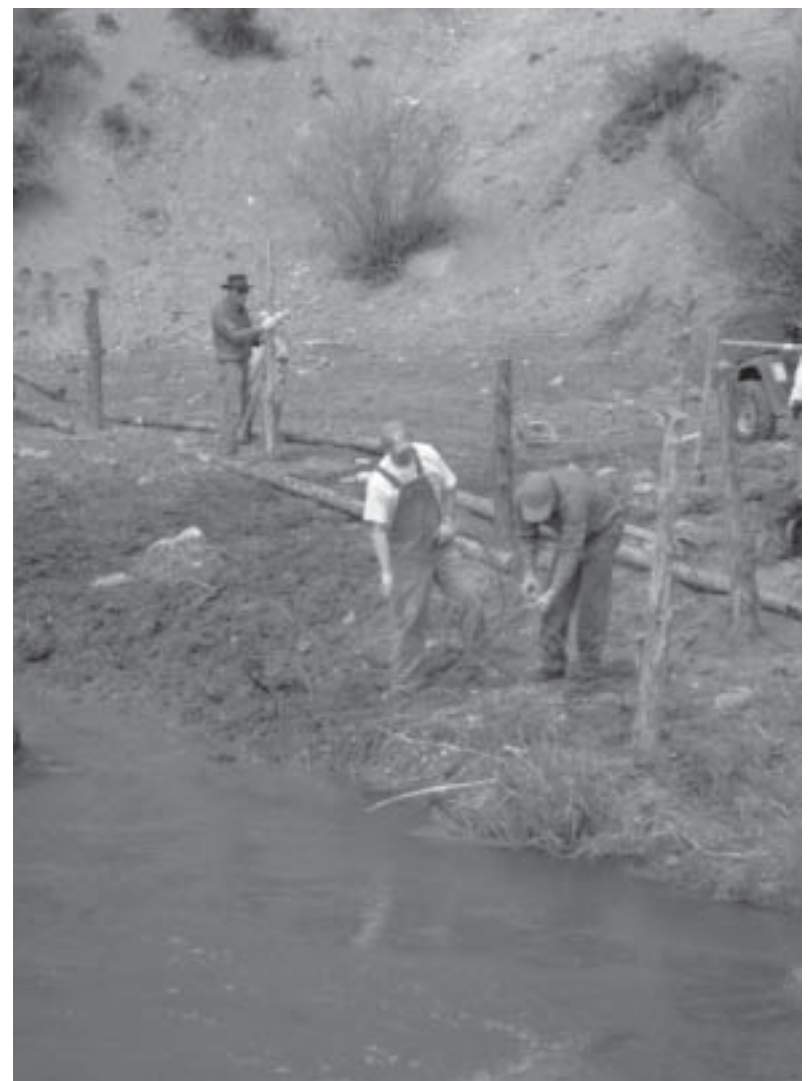
to exclude cattle.

Cattle stream access points and off site watering systems have also been constructed.

Upper San Pitch is on the Governor's list of 25 priority watersheds as part of the Governor's Watershed Initiative.



*Erosion mats and drop structures are just a couple of the many fixes being put into place on a segment of the Upper San Pitch River.*



*Crews work on a cattle exclusion fence. They have already finished a cattle access point to the water several yards down stream.*

# 2004 Utah Nonpoint Source Water Quality Conference

**September 14-16, 2004**  
**Ruby's Inn--Bryce Canyon**

**Theme:**  
**"Balancing Effective Watershed Management"**

Effective watershed management is a delicate balancing in the arid West. No place is this more true than in the red rock country of Southern Utah, which is a blend of public land and private property--scenic wonders and rural livelihood.

In the shadow of Bryce Canyon



National Park, the 2004 Utah Nonpoint Source Water Quality Conference will look at watershed management issues.

Much of the conference will also be dedicated to looking at the Governor's Watershed Initiative, which has identified 25 watershed priority areas within Utah.

Portions of two of those areas-- Upper Sevier River and East Fork Sevier River--will be the focus of the water quality tour the second day of the conference.

For more information call:  
Virginia Sligting: (801) 538-7175  
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## **Registration Information**

Registration: \$115.00  
Hotel Info: 1-800-468-8660  
www.rubysinn.com  
Ruby's Inn, Ruby's Inn RV Park, Bryce View Lodge

**Look for the official registration packet in July!**